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Nat History vol 8.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

G R O W T H

OF

Hemp *and* Flax

I N

GREAT-BRITAIN,

WITH

AN APPENDIX,

BY

J. GEE, of GAINSBOROUGH.

W
1765

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

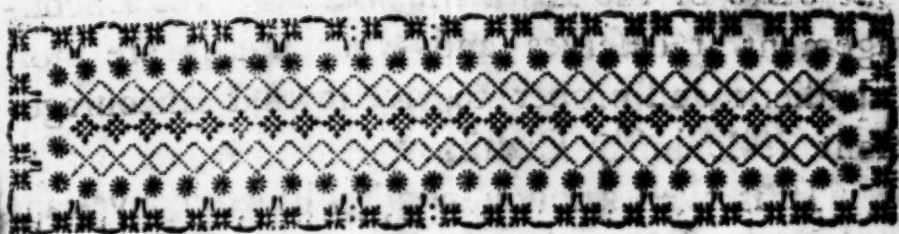
PROGRESS OF

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S R.

IT is an Observation supported and confirmed by all History both Antient and Modern, that the Prosperity of a Nation either rises or falls, in proportion to the Improvements made in it's Trade or the Declension of it's Commerce. Hence it comes to pass that in this Island Lands that at the time of William the Conqueror were not worth above Twelve pence an Acre are now worth Twenty Shillings per Acre : But whatever Improvements of this Kind have hitherto been made, we are yet far very far from arriving at that Perfection in Commercial Affairs, which the natural Advantages of our Soil and Situation connected with the Blessings of a free Government give us opportunity of reaching. — This Consideration induces me (with a Heart entirely devoted to promote the Prosperity of my Country) to lay

before you the following Reflections on the present State of the *Linen Manufacture*, the Encouragement it deserves and what means are most expedient and proper to give it that Encouragement it so justly Claims.

It is well known by all who are conversant in Affairs of this nature, that the *Irish Parliament* have enacted many wise and salutary Laws to encourage and promote their Linen Manufacture and thereby have arrived at very considerable Improvements in this Branch of Commerce.

The *British Parliament* have heartily joyn'd in giving the *Irish* all the Encouragement they can Nor do I envy them whatever Advantages they enjoy in this respect or any others they may wish for. But whilst we are zealous to promote the Interest of *Ireland* let us not be forgetful of our *Mother Country*; An equitable Treatment is what they have a rightful Claim to, but then it is what we likewise have the same rightful Claim to ourselves.—And those regards we dispense to the *Irish* Nation, we should not deny our own, they contribute nothing to support the Crown and Dignity of Britain, only maintain a small Military Force for their own Defence and Security,—and if they do not bear a proportionably *equal share* with us in the weight of the Publick Expence I cannot see that they are entituled to a *Superior Share* in the Legislature's

Legislature's Regard and Attention. By Virtue of the Laws enacted in favour of their Trade they are now from being the Inhabitants of a Rude and Savage Country become one of the *most flourishing* Islands in the World, and such may they long continue! But shall not *we* be animated by *their* Example, shall not *we* be actuated by the same Commendable Spirit of Zeal and Devotion for the Honour and Prosperity of our Native Land? Shall not the *British Lion* be rous'd out of his Sleep, and instead of *dreaming* over the *Natural Advantages* we enjoy for Trade, shall we not shew Ourselves *thoroughly awake*, learn from our Neighbours how to exert ourselves in good Earnest in Improving them?

A few Specimens of the Encouragement given by the *Irish* to the *Linen Manufactory's* may not be improperly introduced here.

To all Merchants who import good Hemp and Flax Seed a Bounty is allow'd of Five Shillings per Barrel.

All Growers of Hemp and Flax are supply'd with such Quantity of Seed at the Public Expence as will be Sufficient for Sowing such Grounds as they occupy for that purpose.

The Linen board of Trade in *Ireland* have likewise agreed to give to all Growers of Flax who shall produce 800 Weight or upwards that

is valued worth Thirty Five Shillings per Hundred Ten Shillings per Hundred Bounty,

To every one that Occupies two Acres of Land more so as to Produce therefrom 800 Weight of clean dress'd Flax Valued at Thirty Shillings a Bounty of Eight Shillings per Hundred for all he grows is allow'd him.

To every one who produces 800 Weight of Flax Valued at Twenty Shillings per Hundred a Bounty of Six Shillings per Hundred is allow'd him.

Here we see that the *Irish* instead of Importing Foreign Flax have Sense enough to improve their Estates and enrich their Country by Encouraging the Home Growth of It—But even all this wou'd be to no purpose without Manufactory's properly Established and Encouraged to Consume it; And for that End they have made Provision as follows.

For any Persons that will set up a Linen Manufactory in any part of *Ireland* where they find it most Convenient It is provided that at the National Expence they shall be furnished with Dwelling houses, Warehouses, Hatchelling Shops, Bleaching Houses, Weaving Shops, and all other Buildings Conveniencys and Utensils such as Coppers and Cisterns Looms Reeds Wheels Reels Hatchells necessary for the carrying on of that
Business

Business besides Lands Sufficient for the same Purpose and the Payment of a Foreman and a White-sters Wages — To these Encouragements are added the following Premiums.

To such Person or Persons as shall Manufacture or Cause to be Manufactured the greatest Quantity of sound Merchantable Linen Cloth of 26 Inches breadth or upwards made of cleans'd Yarn not less in Value than 6d per Yard nor more than 10d being such as is fit for *British* Colonies and Plantations and shall cause the same to be Exported to *Great Britain* between First of May 1746 and First of May 47 Provided the Quantity so Exported be not less then 50,000 Yards a Premium is granted by the Board of Trade of 500 £.

To such as have not obtained the first Premium and who Export not less than 40,000 Yards a Premium of 400 £ is granted.

To such as have not obtained the first or Second Premium and who Export not less than 30,000 Yards a Premium of 300 £ is granted.

To such as have not obtained the first second or third Premium and who Export not less than 20,000 Yards 200 £ Premium is granted.

To such as have not obtained the first 2d, 3d and 4th Premium and who Export not less than 10,000 Yards a Premium of 100 £ is granted.

Thus putting together the *Irish* Premium and

the Bounty upon *Irish* Linen of $1d \frac{1}{4}$ a Yard granted by the Parliament of Great Britain they have a *Drawback* upon all Linens from $6d$ to $10d$ Value of $3d \frac{1}{4}$ of a Penny.

Now the Subjects of *Great Britain* having no Encouragement for the Manufactory of Linen but the Bounty of $1d \frac{1}{4}$ a Yard upon Exportation which Extends to the *Irish* in Common with us the Premiums specified above enable them to undersell us both abroad and at Home $2d \frac{1}{6}$ of a penny per Yard.

What is still to be added the Parliament of *Ireland* has granted a Bounty of $4d$ per Yard upon all *Irish* Sail Cloth Valued at $14d$ per Yard and all Sail Cloth not of less than $10d$ a Yard Value, to have a Bounty of $2d$ per Yard — Now the Bounty allow'd by the *British* Parliament on the Exportation of Sale Cloth of *British* Manufacture, is but $2d$ per Ell so that they are enabled to undersell us abroad $3d$ per Ell in their heavy Cloth and a half-penny per Ell in their Light and at home (*British* Cloth having no Bounty but upon Exportation) they can undersell us $5d$ per Ell their heavy Cloths; and their Light $2d \frac{1}{2}$ per Ell which entirely throws the Trade into their Hands.

By these means the *Irish* Parliament and Board of Trade, have advanced their *Linen Manufactory* to a very Considerable Height which without

out some such Provisions, it wou'd have been impossible for them to have done as *Foreigners* must otherwise have under sold them. The *Irish* find that these Bounties and Premiums are so far from being an oppressive Burthen to the State, that on the other hand they contribute greatly to promote the Public Utility and welfare.

And why in the Name of *Wisdom*, should not the Success that the *Irish* have met with in this Article, provoke us to follow their Example and tread in their Steps? — I hope we do not want Heads in *Great Britain* well qualified to concert such Measures as are happily calculated to Promote the Public good. — But however that be God forbid we shou'd want *Hearts* to approve of such well concerted Measures as come recommended to us by the Experience of others, or that we should want Public Spirit to enforce and Execute those Measures so recommended when they appear to be of the most distinguishing National Importance.

This leads me to take Notice that in England we have many Thousand Acres of Land very proper for the Culture of Flax and Hemp, that lye in a Great Measure Useless and uncultivated at present — as to your Rich and fruitful Soils it is well known that they'l Produce Flax and Hemp in Abundance. The only dispute then is whether they are to be grown in bleak barren Grounds —
To

To determine this we need only appeal to Facts, Passing over a Variety of other Instances which have frequently fallen within the Compass of my own Observation, the following I wou'd lay before my Readers as they were communicated to me by a Gentleman of *Great worth and Distinction*.

In the *West and East Rideing of Yorkshire* and in *Marshland* they Grow Great Quantities of Hemp and Flax the Soil or Earth about *Holme in Spalding Moor* where it is supposed they grow the Finest Hemp in *England*, is a barren Sand : But brings forth large Crops of Hemp and Flax with proper care and Culture.

The Soil or Ground about *North and South Cave Elleker, Hotham, Cliff* and many other Towns near *Weeton*, is a Red Sand which in some places abound with Pebbles and Gravel and in others with small Stones of the Nature and Quality of Lime Stones — Yet these Grounds by Manuring produce large Quantities of Hemp and Flax.

The Grounds near the River *Darwent* from the *Ouze* to *Malton* as also about *Howden* and down by the *Ouze* and *Humber* all of them produce good Hemp and Flax ; tho' in some of those different Places the Soil is extremely different, In some is a Sand in others a *Loam* in some a *Warp* and in many a very strong Clay.

In

In *Marshland* most of the Grounds are Clay or Strong Warp, thrown up by the River *Ouze* — This Kind of Soil is of that Quality that in a dry Summer it will crack with the Heat of the Sun so that you may put a Hand or Foot into the Chinks or Openings of the Ground, yet if it be but once covered with the Hemp or Flax, before the Heats come on (and it is commonly covered within Ten Days or a Fourtnight after it is sown) the said Ground shall never crack or open that Summer.

In the Isle of *Axholme* in the County of *Lincoln* the Culture and Management of Hemp and Flax is the Chief employ of the Inhabitants. — It has been noted for the Growth and Cultivation thereof as long since as the Days of John Leland the Antiquary who was employed in the Survey in the Reign of Hen. 8 and gives this Account of it that it is a fruitfull Island being 21 Miles long but not passing half so broad abounding with Flax and Hemp, &c.

In this Island, upon the River *Trent* where is grown the best Hemp; the Soil is a strong Warp or Clay, In the inner part thereof, the Soil is a Mixture of Sand Loam Hazle Earth and some strong Clay, which different Soils produce both Hemp and Flax.

At *Beltoft* the Soil is a Mixture of Gravel and Sand

. Sand but nevertheless produces Hemp and Flax equally good with the other.

At *Crowle* there is one of the largest Fields in the whole Island being Sand, which has not been fallowed for time immemorial (*Viz.*) when they have a Barley Stubble in the Spring they Manure it with New and fresh Manure, either Horse Dung or Cow Dung or both and Plow it under, then they Sow their Hemp Seed and Harrow it in with a Short tooth'd light Harrow which if accompany'd with a Suitable Season generally produces a Good Crop, Hemp destroys all Vegetables and leaves the Ground free from Weeds and by a Pinfallow is well fitted for Flax in the Spring, as soon as the Flax is pulled they prepare the Ground for Wheat or Rye as it Suits; after the Corn is got they Pinfallow it and in the Spring Sow Barley, upon the Barley Stubble they Manure and Sow Hemp again as already recited, they have Four Crops for one Manuring So the Ground never lies fallow. The same Husbandry is Used in several other of the Places above mentioned.

In the *Levels* of *Hatfield* Chase which was drain'd about the Years 1620 or 30 they have different Soils or Sorts of Earth, near the Ancient Rivers *Idle* and *Dun* now dry'd up by the New drainage the Ground is Strong Warp thrown up by those Rivers before their drainage; The lower
part

part of these *Levels* is a hungry grey Earth and 20 Years ago was full of Worms or Insects which used when it proved a dry Season in the Month of *April* or begining of *May* when the Oats there sown were got a hand above Ground to Eat them up by the Roots — hereby they oft sustained considerable loss; but have now found out a Remedy that effectually prevents their suffering such Injuries at Present, which is to Manure those Grounds with Lime upon a fallow, and then Sow them down with Wheat or Rye after this Manuring, the second Crop Oats the third Oats, then Instead of a fallow they Sow Flax, which is sold from Six to Eight Pounds per Acre, about *Midsummer* or *July* after the Flax is gethered of the Ground they forthwith Plow it, Manure it with Lime and Sow Wheat &c. as above — By those means this Land which 20 Years ago wou'd scarce produce Oats, now produces a *constant Succession* of good Crops from One Year to another !

I have known Land that had not laid to Grass above 20 Years and worth for Pasturage not above 10 or 15 Shillings per Acre let for the growing of Flax for the first Year at 4 £ per Acre the Two next Years at 3 £ and the 4th at 40 Shillings per Acre prices which the Tenants might very well afford to pay, for the Land produceed from 50 to
70 Stones

70 Stones an Acre and when dres'd, Sold from Six to Eight Shillings a Stone.

As to the proper Manure in order to grow and Cultivate Hemp, Cow or Horse Dung, or Ashes of Turf of Peat or of Coal are all Usefull; but the Dung of Pidgeons sown upon the Land when the Hemp Seed is sown is reputed the best, For my own part I suppose that Lime, Marl, Burnt Clay &c. wou'd be as good Manure for Hemp as any—I have known a Hemp Yard Manured with the Mud that came out of a Pond when dres'd produce fine Hemp and an Excellent Crop.

These Accounts naturally lead me to Point out a few of the Advantages that wou'd accrue to the Public from giving proper Encouragement to grow Hemp and Flax within the *British* Dominions.

Supposing that we import Yearly 10,000 Tuns of Flax and Hemp, as it's probable we do, shou'd we in Lieu thereof grow these Quantities at Home, the Corn we grow wou'd be considerably less in Proportion; consequently we should *export* Proportionably less and thereby *save* large Sums which are now paid by the Government upon such *Exportation*. Hemp and Flax are likewise Commodities which we Purchase from Nations where the Ballance of Trade with us, Turns in their own Favour, and as even the *Irish* Yarn which we have imported

imported here for the Manufacture of Manchester
 Goods is by the Parliament of *Ireland* made liable
 to the payment of a Duty — this Duty we shou'd
 save as of right we ought and Manufacture *Man-*
chester Stuffs at a proportionable less Expence were
 there Proper Encouragement to grow Flax and
 Hemp of our own, These Considerations all duly
 weighed and attended to, the Growth and Con-
 sumption of our own Flax and Hemp cannot be
 Estimated at less than a Yearly Salvage of 250,000*£*
 to the Nation — Besides our Merchant Men and
 the Royal Navy wou'd hereby be better supplied
 and Provided with Cordage &c. in times of
 War than it can be otherwise supposed that they
 should, Let me add that our *English* Hemp is not
 of that dry and spungy nature which that Imported
 from *Petersburgh* and *Riga* is remarkable for but is
 much less porous has a more Solid Body and strong
 Heart. The Principal Objection which the Rope-
 makers Urge against using it is that it takes less
 Tar than the Foreign to Manufacture it into Cor-
 dage and therefore as Tar is cheaper than Hemp
 the Profit that arises to them from working it is
 proportionably less; and it is undoubtedly true that
 as *English* Hemp is of a more Solid and less porous
 Texture than the Foreign, less Tar will suffice to
 work it and it will not receive any more than it
 wants — or in other words any more than is Suf-
 ficient

ficient to preserve it from the Weather. Consequently the Cordage made of *English* Hemp when compared with that of the same Dimensions work'd up with Foreign, must be stronger in Proportion to the greater Quantity of Hemp used in Manufacturing It—as Hemp must be allow'd on all hands to be a stronger and more durable Substance than Tar — And as it has been already shewn, that growing the Hemp prepares the Ground for Flax, the whole Crop of Hemp must be *clear gain* to the Farmers as it will be Cultivated according to the abovesaid Parochial Customs, when if the Ground had been Occupied for any other purpose it must have lain fallow. It has been a Vulgar Notion that *Hemp* and *Flax* Impoverish the Soil that Grows them ; but from the Historical Relations already given of their Culture it appears that this is only a Vulgar Prejudice unsupported by any good Authority, that it is so far from being so in fact, that on the other Hand they Meliorate and improve the Soil.

In *Crowle* and severál other places where they grow large Crops of the best Hemp and Flax the best Manure is bought at the Rate of Four pence a Waggon Load ; which demonstratively shows that Grounds appropriated to the Growth of those comoditys are far from consuming those large Quantitys

Quantities of Manure which some have Ignorantly and inadvertently Suggested.

I have not taken into this Account the Number of Poor that might be Employed in the Improvement of this Valuable Branch of Agriculture and Commerce, nor the Advance that must be made in the Rent of the Lands in proportion to the large Quantity of Hemp and Flax we grow and Manufacture. These are so obvious from what have been already offered that they cannot Escape any Readers attention.

Shou'd the Legislature Judge proper to take this affair into Consideration and in Imitation of the *Irish* encourage *British* Linen Manufactories &c. as above — Proper Persons might be got from any of the aforesaid Places that wou'd furnish such as wou'd grow and dress Flax and Hemp with all the Instructions and Assistance necessary for such purpose — Not many Years since several Persons from those parts were carried over by the late *Judge Coote* to *Ireland* with that View and Intention.

Since Hemp and Flax can be raised at Home with so much Ease and it will be attended with so many advantages you will not wonder Sir that I hear with Regret that the Parliament hath allow'd such large Bounties for the Encouragement of the Growth of them in America. This is perhaps

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better

• better than to send such large Sums into Russia on that Account, but it is no otherwise eligible then it is the lesser Evil of the Two : — but an Evil it still is and a very great one. This Subject might furnish Ample Matter for a Moderate Pamphlet ; I can only at present give a few short and Hasty Hints upon it but they will however sufficiently prove what I have just asserted, It is certainly more adviseable to have our Hemp and Flax grow at Home if it were for no other reason then that we shou'd have Commoditys so Necessary to us as a naval and commercial Power always at Hand and without being Subject as in Times of War we may be to great Rescues and Inconveniencies in the Importation of it — The Bounties upon Hemp and Flax Grown in and imported from our *Colonies* will utterly discourage if not absolutely put an End to the Growth of them at *Home* which I have demonstrated to be so Advantageous and at the same time it will not be attended with any Advantages to compensate for so vast a loss but rather indeed with Inconveniencies and Mischiefs even to the Colonies themselves whatever Advantage may accrue to the Individuals who are immediately employed in the Cultivation of these Commoditys.

Good Policy requires that our Colonies should be as well Peopled and to as great an Extent of
Country

Country as *possible* because this certainly tends both to their Security and Flourishing State and the Aggrandizement of the British Empire : But as the Cultivation of only a few Acres of Hemp and Flax will require as many Hands as might otherwise Occupy and improve Five Times the Number of Acres in raising most other kinds of produce, it is Manifest that this Scheme (Viz.) The Bounties on American Hemp and Flax will tend to the Depopulation of our Colonies as the persons thus employed will be confined to some little Spots who would otherwise Occupy and Cultivate a large Extent of Country which so far as this Scheme takes place must remain an Uncultivated Desert— The Americans have no sort of Occasion to grow Hemp and Flax for it is well known that the cutting down and transporting of lumber, the raising of Corn more or less for their own Use (as in all the Colonies) and for the supply of the rest (as in Pensilvania) the Fisheries, the Growth of Rice, Tobacco, Indigo, &c. and the Useful and Necessary Arts of Life, are sufficient to Employ Ten Times the Number of People we have in all our Colonies — To furnish these Numbers the Mother Country is perpetually drained and yet they fall vastly short of what are still wanted, why should it then like Spain be further exhausted not for the working of Golden Mines (which yet

as their Experience may sufficiently instruct us would never Answer) but for the carrying into Execution a Scheme which the aforementioned Reasons prove to be not only Superfluous and Useless but pernicious?

And what reason can be given why we should grant such Bounties on the American Hemp and Flax when with the same or less Encouragement we cou'd raise a sufficient Quantity of these Commodities for all Necessary Uses, and at a Cheaper Rate, which wou'd be so great an Advantage to our Manufactures, so vastly raise the Price of Lands and be of such general Utility to our Country? — Surely this is very impolitic not to say unjust Especially when at the same time this Scheme is so prejudicial to *us* it is of no benefit at all to our *American Colonists* who might be more Advantageously employed in raising a produce in which they will not interfere with their Mother Country and which will tend to the more Extensive Population and of Consequence to the greater Security and Prosperity of their own.

Perhaps before this comes to Hand the Resolutions of the Honourable House to grant a Bounty on American Flax and Hemp may be passed into a Law but if they should think proper to make a like grant for the Encouragement of the Growth of Hemp and Flax at Home it will Sufficiently prevent

prevent the Inconveniencies and Mischiefs enumerated above and with such an Indulgence it will be found that our Country will so amply furnish us with the Demand for all Sorts of Services and Uses that we shall in a few Years want neither Hemp nor Flax from any other part of the World and the Bounties granted to the Americans without any formal Repeal of the Law will cease of course.

That Hemp and Flax will grow on all the Variety of Soils aforementioned they who are acquainted with the Culture of them need not to be told and all that are willing to make Enquiry will find to be an unquestionable Fact. I am so far from excepting the more hungry and barren Soils that on the Contrary I have found by Experience that such Soils will produce the finest and the best Hemp not indeed in such Abundance as the Richer Soils but in *sufficient* Quantities to make ample amends for the Trouble and Expence of Cultivation.

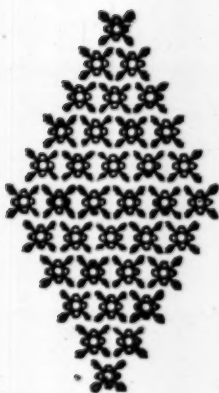
But should the Opinion of the Ignorant be admitted. Viz. that Hemp and Flax will not grow on *all this Variety of Lands* but only upon *some particular kinds of Soil* yet even on *this Supposition* the Arguments for Encouraging the Growth of them at Home will hold in their full force. For since (exclusive of Wales and Scotland) England alone contains very near Forty Millions of Acres no Body can imagine but that in such a
Vast

Vast Tract of Country there must be a great deal more than a sufficient Number of Acres which have the requisite Qualities for this produce,

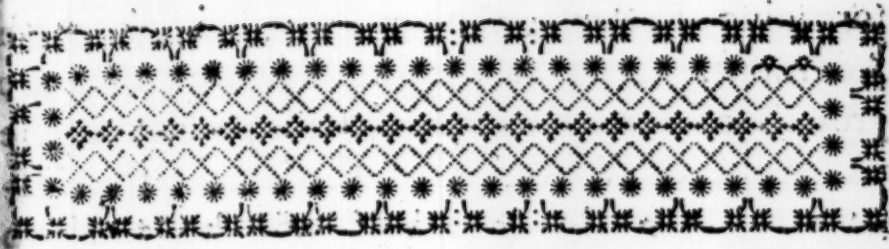
S I R,

As you so warmly interest yourself in whatever may be conducive to the Trade and Manufactures of your Country I take this Occasion (tho' it has but a distant Relation to the main Subject of the Letter and may appear some what Abrupt) to inform you that Application hath been made to Parliament for Encouraging the Manufacturing of Cambrics at a *Sea Port* in *Suffex*. I am myself perswaded and I find it is the general Opinion of the most discerning and Judicious that this is only intended to cover a design to Smuggle Cambrics from France which I believe your further Enquiry will give you reason to Suspect, and yet this proposal hath met with such Notice from Parliament that a Law is just on the Point of passing agreeable to the prayer of the Petitioners. I know you have so much Public Spirit that you will take all the Methods in your power if possible to prevent it. It were better to have the wear of all Cambrics prohibited than that we should send Annually into France above Two Hundred Thousand pounds

Pounds for this Article of Expensive Luxury. If the Honourable House of Commons Please to order Mr. John Greenhow Senior in Woodstreet to attend them he may probably inform them in what manner the Irish are furnished with the Cambrics which they pretend to Manufacture themselves.



17. The first of these is the
fact that the world is not
a uniform whole, but is
divided into many parts,
each of which has its own
character and its own
history.



A P P E N D I X.

I was solicited by Sir Jacob Ackworth but a few Weeks before his Death to give him my Thoughts about Hemp and Flax: and I am willing to do my self some Honour, by informing the Reader, that he was pleased to express a particular regard, to my Judgment in these Articles: And as I have now lived above Fifty Years near that part of the Country where the greatest Quantities are grown; have dealt in them, and had as frequent Opportunities of informing myself; and as much Curiosity as any Man: I hope I may without being suspected of an Excess of Vanity; pretend to have some skill in these Commodities

The Memorandums I had collected, at the abovefaid Gentlemans Request ; I have in the foregoing Letter given to the Publick with Additions. And as the Encouragement of the growth of Hemp and Flax will probably come under the Consideration of Parliament this Sessions. I thought it might not be amiss to add the following short Appendix ; in order to give Weight to any Applications, which may be made to that August Body on this Account ; and further to recommend and press a Scheme of such Vast National Importance ; by representations of it in a yet greater Variety of lights and by additional Arguments drawn from unquestionable Facts. And first it is notorious that our Hemp and Flax are of greater Value than those of Foreign growth. At this time English Flax is from 47----64 Shillings per Ct. and the Foreign only from 31-----46 the Hemp too of English growth is from 24---40 and the Foreign only from 27----29 now of this vast difference in the price of the English, and Foreign Hemp and Flax, what reason can be Assigned but a proportionable Difference in the Value ? Indeed Secondly, I do not pretend to say, that the Foreign Hemp and Flax are originally and in their own Nature so much inferior in Value

to

to those of English Growth ; but if they become so afterwards it is the same thing to the Manufacturer and to all Intents and purposes whatever be the Cause. Now it is well known that the Foreign Hemp and Flax are heated by the close Packing and stowage, in such a Manner as sometimes to Indanger the Firing of the Ship ; always so as to exhale a good part of the very Heart, strength and Essence of these Commodities ; (*C. D.*) and often so as to give them such a Fox Colour, as we generally term it, that they can never be bleached to the same Degree of Whiteness, and this hath been a Temptation to several of

(*C. D.*) The Heat in Proportion to the Degree, in which it Acts upon and Affects the Flax ; destroys it's Nature, and Extracts the Oily Quality which should preserve it ; in so much that in Dressing it breaks and falls into short Tow ; which is frequently Sold for one penny per Pound : So that One Hundred Weight of English Flax, of the Middling Price, which I have now Dressing yields seven Dozen and four Pounds clean dressed long Flax ; when one hundred Weight of Foreign middle Priced, will yield no more than Five Dozen clean Dressed long Flax. I therefore apprehend that One Hundred Weight of English Flax is so many Degrees Stronger than One Hundred Weight of Foreign Flax, as Eighty Eight is above Sixty.

the Manufacturers to Use Lime ; which still further impairs the strength of the Cloths which are made of it ; and particularly of the Sail-Cloth to the great detriment of his Majesty's Service ; and the no small Encrease in this Article of naval Expence. And if such are the Inconveniences in Consequence of the damage done to these Commodities in a Voyage from the Baltic of from Fifteen to Twenty days *only* : I leave it to the impartial to judge how greatly these Inconveniencies must be Augmented ; when we import Hemp and Flax from America ; and when these Commodities are Squeezed together in the Ship for a Voyage of Thrice that Term.

Thirdly, If such is the Superior Value of the English Hemp and Flax this proves to Demonstration that the Notion which hath obtained, Viz. that our Lands are not so proper for the Cultivation of them, is a gross and palpable Mistake ; which takes it's Rise from the Ignorance of the *many* ; who are it is not improbable the infatuated Dupes of the base *few* ; who have propagated the Notion to serve their own private and mercenary Views. That Land which produces better or but as good

good Hemp and Flax as those of any Foreign Country is as proper for the Cultivation of them must be evident even to the understanding of a Child. As for the Objection that but a very small part of our Lands comparatively is proper for the Cultivation of these Commodities I refer to what has been said in the foregoing Letter where it is insisted upon that almost all kinds of Land are proper for the Growth of them and besides what is there said in proof of it I add

Fourthly, That we import Hemp and Flax from Countries that lie under a *great Variety of Latitudes* and where of Consequence there must be a great Diversity in the Soil from which it is produced and this must needs appear even to these who are unexperienced to be a strong Presumption of the truth and Justice of the just mentioned Assertion, Viz. that almost all sorts of Soil are fit for this produce which however it is by no means necessary to suppose in order to shew the Practicableness as well as Expedience of raising these Commodities amongst our selves ; because if there were a Selection of less than one

Hundreth part of the Lands of England alone for this Use it would raise a Sufficient Quantity to answer all our *National* Demands if not to furnish the Materials of *Foreign Commerce*. The certainty of this last Assertion as well as the Expedience and Importance of extending and improving the Cultivation of them amongst ourselves will appear if we consider a Variety of other Evils and Inconveniences arising from the Importation of Hemp and Flax from Foreign Countrys and *specially from America* and the advantages of raising them in our own. And for the Illustration of this the following Observations are submitted to the Consideration of the Candid and impartial Examiner. But before I enter upon the Detail I must premise ; that I have supposed the Quantity of Hemp and Flax imported to be Ten Thousand Tuns in the Body of the Letter and I have fixed upon that Number, not that I imagine it to be so little ; but only to shew how hurtful the Importation must be, taking the Quantity at the *lowest*. However I question not but the Quantity is much greater ; tho' it is not possible for me to ascertain it : And as some may think it adds great Force to the Objection, against the practicableness of raising what Hemp and Flax we want amongst ourselves

selves ; if it shall appear that we want a much greater Quantity. I will therefore now fix it at the *highest* in order to give as fair Play as possible to the Objector and shew that even on this Supposition there is no Weight in the Argument : And that it greatly augments the Mischiefs of Foreign and especially of all American Importations with so large a Bounty, and this Preliminary thus settled I proceed

Fifthly, To observe that if we should want Forty Thousand Tuns of Hemp and Flax, that One Hundred and Sixty Thousand Acres (which is a trifle out of the Millions in this Kingdom) will raise the whole ; and after Two Years the Land will produce the same Crops of Corn as before. So that here would be a saving according to the Price which Flax gave when I wrote the foregoing Letter of only a Million but according to the Price at present it is one Sixth part more or One Million Two Hundred Thousand Pounds : A Sum well worthy the Notice of the Legislature and too great an advantage to be given to the Americans ; specially at a time when

we are pressed down by the Load of such a Vast National Debt: And when in Defiance of the Authority, and Laws of their Mother Country; and forgetful of their dependence and Obligations; they are setting up Manufactures of Edge Tools Nails Linen &c. Well may they laugh at our folly and sing up and down the Streets of Boston the Downfall of Old England is the Rise of the New. But whatever provoking Proofs they have given or may give of their Insolence and Ingratitude I am far from envying them any Privilege or hindering them from any Branch of Commerce in which they will not interfere with and prejudice our own Country. But I can see no reason for giving up to them so vast a Branch of Cultivation; the Loss of which will be so greatly detrimental to us; and at the same time as it is observed in the Body of the Letter in the End must prove so ruinous to *them*; however some private Persons amongst them and ourselves may reap some temporary Benefit from the Job. But to lay no stress on this last particular and admitting that this Scheme viz. the Grant of a Bounty upon their Hemp and Flax would be ever so solid and extensive a Benefit to our Colonies: Yet I am so singular in my Opinion as to think that
such

such a high strain of Generosity as would lead us to *impoverish and ruin* our selves ; in order to *aggrandize and enrich* them ; is as inconsistent with the Laws of Humanity rightly understood ; as with the plainest Rules of Prudence and the most obvious dictates of Common Sense ; and it reminds me of a certain great Tradesman who abounded so much in Charity good Man ! that in a Journey of about Five Days He gave to Beggars Strollers and Pickpockets no less than Thirty Pounds ; and in a few days after broke in so much Debt that he was not able to pay above Two Shillings and Sixpence per Pound to his Creditors. But all Comparisons must fall short of exposing the absurdity of this preposterous Policy as it deserves. Let any one pause a little and reflect on the annual loss of Twelve Hundred Thousand Pounds to this Nation and in it's *present critical Situation too* and he cannot possibly think this Censure too severe and yet whensoever the whole Number of Forty Thousand Tuns of Hemp and Flax shall be raised in America or *under that Denomination (A. B.)* shall

(*A. B.*) It is but too probable that before there can be a sufficient Quantity raised in America the Merchants will

shall be imported amongst us ; in Consequence of the Encouragement given by the Legislature the loss will be much greater ; for over and above the Twelve Hundred Thousand Pounds there will be a Bounty of Eight Pounds per Tun which on Forty Thousand Tuns amounts to Three Hundred and Twenty Thousand Pounds, and if we suppose half of it to be Hemp, there will be a Loss of Fifty Shillings old duty on Twenty Thousand Tuns, which amounts to Fifty Thousand Pounds more ; and makes the total Annual Loss to this Country One Million Five Hundred and Seventy Thousand Pounds besides the many Mischiefs and Inconveniences which must attend the Execution of this Scheme and which have been in part enumerated before. I must remind the Candid Reader that I do not pretend to assert that we must import precisely the Quantity of Forty Thousand Tuns, and that consequently the Loss must be quite as great as I have represented ; but when we reflect that the Grant of so large a Bounty to the Americans

will pour in upon us large Quantities under that Denomination for the sake of saving the Duty and gaining besides so Exorbitant a Bounty.

Americans must (as hath been hinted and will be
 again more particularly observed) must put
 an End to the Growth of Hemp and Flax
 at Home ; it is certain the Quantity which
 in that Case will be imported from thence or
under that Denomination must be prodigiously
 augmented (and for what I know to the con-
 trary to Forty Thousand Tuns) and that the
 Loss must be great in proportion. But as
 perhaps this extensive View of the Mischiefs
 and Evils we have mentioned may not be
 comprehended by those who are not used to
 take in the Interests of Nations and King-
 doms ; and consider on which side the Ba-
 lance turns in Consequence of the Improve-
 ment or neglect of Agriculture and Commerce ;
 such persons need only confine their Views
 to the last mentioned object Viz. the Growth
 of these Commodities at Home.

And Sixthly, Seriously consider how this
 Scheme of giving so large (or even almost
 any) Bounty to the Americans ; will affect
 the Counties in which these Commodities are
 grown. These are numerous and the Quanti-
 ties which they grow in many of them far
 from being inconsiderable : in so much that
 I believe not less than Six Thousand Bushels
 of

of Hemp Seed are sent in one Year into the Counties of *Salop*, *Warwick*, *Stafford* and *Ches-ter*, in all which there are very few Farmers or Cottagers but what have a Hemp Pleck, (as they call it) the Produce of which they Spin and cause to be Wove for the Use of their Families. And by the way you will take Notice that they raise the Hemp upon any sort of Soil where their Lot is cast. I have had sufficient means of being thoroughly informed of these Facts, for it is not many Years since I kept up a Constant Correspondence and Commerce with these Parts, being Used to send Annually from Three to Four Hundred Quarters of Hemp Seed into the just mentioned Counties : They have also very good Flax. It is needless to observe how greatly these poor People will be prejudiced by these Bounties to the Americans, who ought rather themselves to have this Indulgence ; but the Counties of *Lincoln* and *York* will sustain the greatest damage : It is well known that there is a Vast Tract of Land to the Extent of near One hundred Miles which runs through a part of both these Counties ; the principal Produce of which hath been Flax and Hemp for some Centuries past, and which hath employed and supported many Thousand Family's
who

who grow as good Hemp and Flax as any in Europe. This hath so Encreased the Value of the Lands that they are let for four times the Rent of Lands of the same Quality and Goodness employed in the Cultivation of any other Produce. Now as soon as the Bountys granted on American Hemp and Flax shall produce their effect so far as to furnish us with the Quantities we want ; or as soon as a sufficient Quantity shall be Imported *under that Denomination*, there will be an immediate Loss of all these Advantages ; for in this Situation it will be absolutely impossible, for our Country Men in these Countys who have no Bounty, to dispose of the smallest Quantity of these Commodities ; and of Consequence the high Rents of the Lands which produce them will sink it is probable to One Quarter of what the Land-lords formerly received, and the Tenants could chearfully afford to pay ; and then the Ruin will be immediately felt by them, and conspicuous to all. The same Observation may be Extended to all the Countys where Hemp and Flax are grown ; and the late Bounty Act when once it begins to operate, will be attended with the like Consequences in them all. And this being the Case I am well perswaded, that if the
Worthy

Worthy Gentlemen, who represent these Parts of the Country in Parliament, had consulted with their Constituents (which as I'm told was the laudable Custom formerly when any Affair of Importance was upon the Carpet) the late Act could never have passed into a Law. However now they are apprized of the Inconveniencies and Mischiefs of it, I flatter myself such is their Probity and Public Spirit, that they will apply themselves with so much the greater Zeal and Diligence to prevent *some way or other* the pernicious Effects of it ; if not by a *formal* Repeal of the Act itself. Such and so much worse will be the Effects (as by this time it must be evident) of these Bounties on the American Hemp and Flax about which scarce any Body is concern'd : than the Effects of the Importation of other Foreign Hemp and Flax which of late hath given so general an Alarm to all ; and if this is not sufficient to engage my Countrymen in a hearty and vigorous Concurrence in their Application to Parliament for Relief under this Grievance : I must desire them

Seventhly, To compare together and consider in Contrast with the Mischiefs arising from the American Bountys, the Advantages

of growing Forty Thousand Tuns of Hemp and Flax in our own Country. Now (to bring the whole into one united View) here will be a saving as was before Observed of Twelve Hundred Thousand Pounds which is now Expended in the Importation of Foreign Hemp and Flax ; and of Fifteen Hundred and Seventy Thousand Pounds if it is imported from America (supposing the Number of Tuns to be as just mentioned) or if not the saving will be in Proportion and doubtless very considerable ; if we add to this the Encrease in the Value of the Lands and their Produce, to the Proprietor or Tenant or both, when a so much greater Number of Acres shall be appropriated to this Service ; and if we take into the Account the Gains from the Encrease of labour to the Public as well as to the poor Individuals, who will be employed about the Land and about the same Hemp and Flax till they come to the Dressers Hands ; all these accumulated together must amount to a prodigious and almost Immense Sum. If any one shall think that this is only an Airy Speculation let him.

Eighthly, Only attend to the following Fact of which He may be easily informed viz. that the Hemp and Flax which are grown in
Lincolnshire

Lincolnshire, are of greater Value than all the Wool; altho' they are raised out of less than the Thirtieth part of the Land allotted for the Sheep; and altho' the Wool of the just mentioned County exceed in Quantity that of any other in the Kingdom Yorkshire alone excepted. Now as this County is not the largest let any one Judge from this Specimen of the vast Advantages which must accrue from the general Encouragement of this Cultivation.

On the whole it is Evident that a very Extensive Culture of Hemp and Flax is very practicable, that the carrying it into Execution is highly Expedient, and must be attended with general and National Advantages of inestimable Value; all this appears from Arguments not to be called in Question, for the Evidence on which it is Established is that of stubborn Facts. It follows that the Encouragement of the growth of these Commodities amongst us if not by an Abolition of the American Bountys at least by a grant of the same upon those of our own Growth is a Scheme altogether worthy the Wisdom and Public Spirit of a British Parliament and for this reason the Author of these papers doubts not but he shall be excused for earnestly recommending these usefull and interesting Remarks to the Consideration of that illustrious Assembly.

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J. G. E.

